

NOTE ON A THAISID GASTROPOD WITH AN ABNORMAL TENTACLE

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Plate 38

Lepsiella scobina (Quoy and Gaimard, 1833) (Thaisidae, Stenoglossa), commonly known as the oyster-borer, occurs in the intertidal area throughout New Zealand. In the northern parts of the North Island it is an important predator on the New Zealand rock oyster, *Crassostrea glomerata* (Gould, 1850). The biology of the oyster-borer, as well as its control in oyster beds, is part of a general study on the biology of the rock oyster.

During an examination of a batch of *L. scobina*, collected from the Bay of Islands area in the North Island on 16 July 1971, one specimen was found to possess an unusual set of tentacles and eyes. The specimen, a female (shell height 19 mm, diameter of body whorl 11.8 mm), had the right cephalic tentacle bifid at the tip, with 2 well-formed eyes on it (Fig.1); right cephalic tentacle bifid at the tip, with 2 well-formed eyes on it (Fig.1); normal tentacle with a single eye on its outer aspect was present on the left side of the head. In the same batch, 346 specimens of *L. scobina* were collected (representing the population in a m² area).

The stub-like median process in the head is probably the result of an injury; the reduced eye on the stub suggests that it was perhaps the original right tentacle. The fully developed bifid appendage in the specimen may therefore represent the regenerated right tentacle. Hanks (1914) has demonstrated remarkable powers of regeneration of soft parts, including that of tentacles and eyes, in another stenoglossan, *Nassarius mutabilis*. However, the bifid nature of the tentacle and the double eye on it are very peculiar to the present specimen, and are probably different from simple duplication of tentacles in species of *Oncomelania*, noted by Wong and Wagner (1956).

REFERENCES

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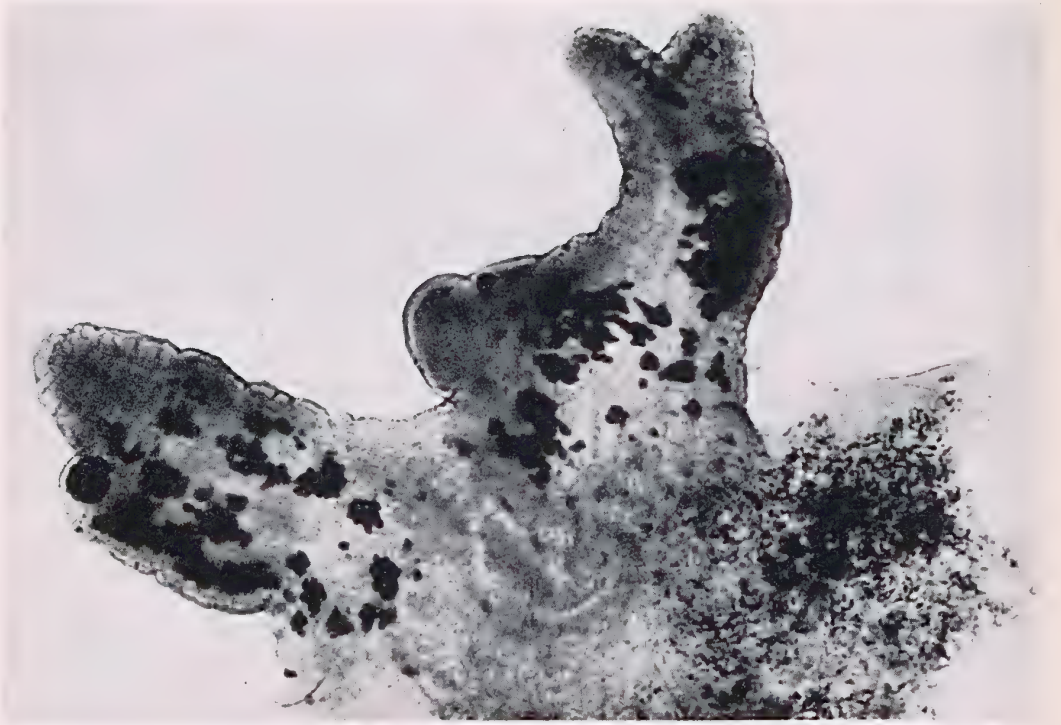


Plate 38. *Lepsiella scobina*. Dorsal view of head, showing abnormal right tentacle and double eyes, and the median lobe with its reduced eye. The irregular blotches are pigments in the skin.